

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries,

As you work to finalize Fiscal Year 24 appropriations legislation and other must pass bills, we urge you to exclude the creation of a so-called fiscal commission, especially with language that creates a “fast-track” process around regular order.

Fiscal Commission legislation currently under consideration by the House Committee on Budget would create a process in which legislating would be done by a small group of individuals behind closed doors. The goal of these commissions would be to produce legislation that cuts benefits and calls for an up or down vote without hearings, and that is unamendable.

This is not a simple debate over process. Without member input and public review, fiscal commissions have historically recommended cutting or privatizing Social Security:

- The *Greenspan Commission*¹ was the basis of the Social Security Amendments of 1983, which resulted in a raise in the retirement age that was the equivalent to a 13% benefit cut, a tax on benefits for middle income retirees, and the creation of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) which reduces the benefits of nearly 2 million public servants.
- The *President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security*, established by President George W. Bush, issued a report outlining three models of partial privatization of Social Security.²
- Most recently, the *Bowles-Simpson Commission*³ recommended raising the retirement age, reducing the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and reducing benefit amounts for many earners.⁴

Given this track record, and the stated intention of the Republican Study Committee, a Commission would have fast-track authority to enact greater cuts to Social Security and other programs vital to the American people. This is no profile in courage, it's a direct circumvention of the process to expedite cuts to Social Security.

Let's be clear, a Commission is not the solution. There is no shortage of legislation that will improve the fiscal standing of the United States while directly benefiting the public. Democratic proposals include legislation that would extend Social Security's solvency for another generation

¹ Formally the *National Commission on Social Security Reform*

² https://www.ssa.gov/history/reports/pcss/Final_report.pdf

³ Formally the *National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform*


⁴ https://www.cbpp.org/research/bowles-simpson-social-security-proposal-not-a-good-starting-point-for-reforms#_ftnref2

while *expanding* benefits the American people rely on – benefits that haven’t been expanded in more than 50 years. It is Congress’s responsibility to conduct the oversight and recommend enhancements to solvency or cuts, and it should be done in the open and not behind closed doors.


We do not need a Commission to tell us what we must do, we need the political courage to take up these or any other proposals in regular order. Committees and subcommittees must have the ability to hold hearings to examine policy and mark-ups so that improvements can be made on behalf of our constituents.

We urge you to commit to regular order by opposing the creation of a fiscal commission in any must pass legislation.


Sincerely,




John B. Larson
Member of Congress




Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress




James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



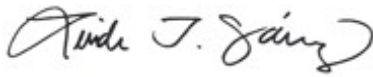
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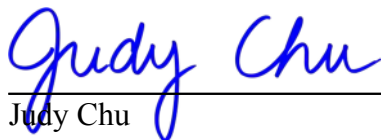
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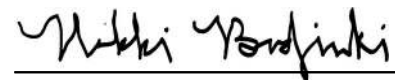
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Nikki Budzinski
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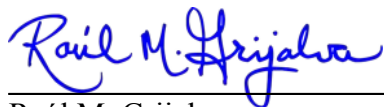
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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



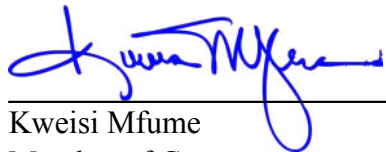
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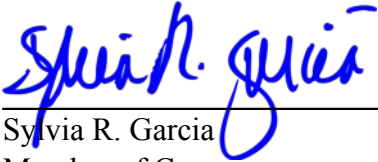
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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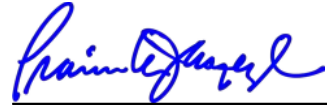
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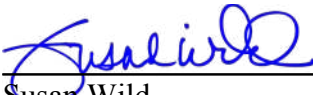
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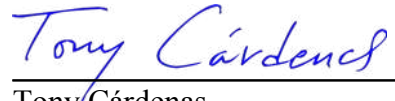
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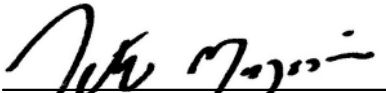
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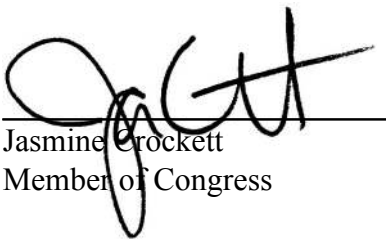
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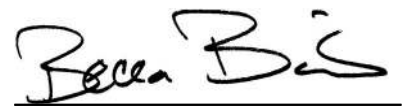
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Cori Bush
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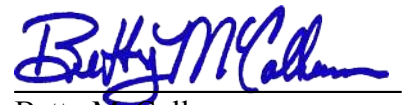
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Joaquin Castro

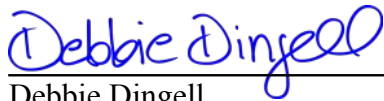
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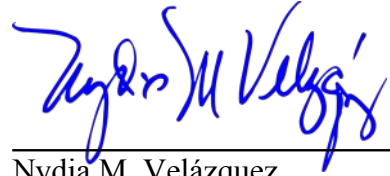
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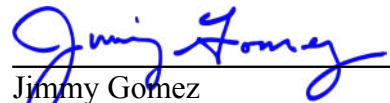
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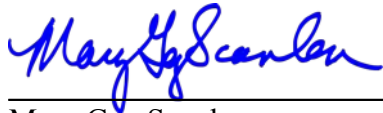
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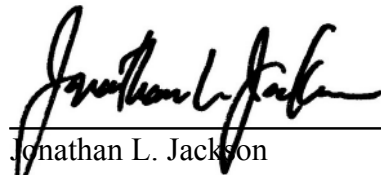
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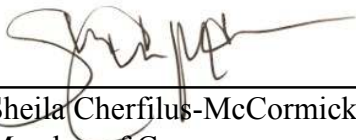
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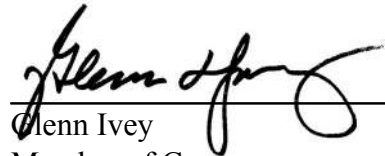
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Teresa Leger Fernández
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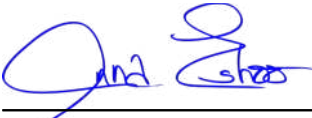
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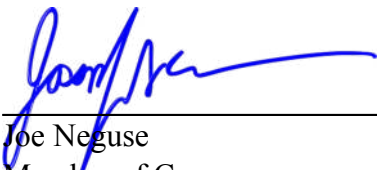
Jared Moskowitz
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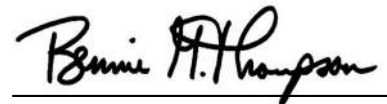
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